

Lithuania

Type of Government: Parliamentary Republic.

Head of State: President Dalia Grybauskaitė (term ends 2016)

Capital City: Vilnius

Ideology: Moved swiftly to capitalism after the break-up of the Soviet Union, and has recently joined the EU and NATO.

Region: Eastern Europe

Neighbours: Belarus, Latvia, Poland, and Russia.



DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population:** 3.5 million. Extremely low population growth and many Lithuanians are choosing to immigrate to other nations.
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 77%, Russian Orthodox 4%, with 16% not responding and the remainder aligned with minority religions
- **Age:** Median age of 41, life expectancy of 75 (about average), but percentage of senior citizens (10.8%) well above regional average.
- **Ethnicities:** 84% Lithuanian, 6.6% Polish, 5.8% Russian, 1.2% Belarusian and 2.4% other ethnicities.
- **National Language:** Lithuanian (official language), Russian, Polish.

ECONOMY

- Relatively high GDP of US\$ 64.31 billion (87th worldwide).
- World Bank Classification: High Income Economy,
- Poverty Rate: 4% below line, but unemployment at 13.2% (comparatively high)
- GDP growth was 3.6% (2012 est.) falling from 5.9% (2011 est.), 1.5% (2010 est.). Lithuania was one of the fastest growing economies in the world last decade (1998–2008), but was once of the biggest victims of the global economic crisis.
- Inflation rate: 3.1% (about average).

Major Industries

- Services (composed primarily of information and communication technologies) 68%
- Industry (especially processing dairy products and furniture production) 28%
- Agriculture 3.3% of GDP

Exports

- **Major Trading Partners:** Russia, Latvia, Germany, and Poland
- Major industry for export include: biotechnology, plastics, laser technologies, metal processing, furniture, and textiles and clothing.

Imports

- In 2011 the total value of imports was US\$30.4 bn
- Mineral products and oil 21% of total

Natural Resources

- Most valuable natural resource in Lithuania is subterranean water, which constitutes more than a half of the total value of natural resources.

MILITARY

Size: 14,500 active troops, 4,260 reservists.

Army: 240 Light and Medium Tanks, 220 armoured vehicles, and 100 artillery units.

Air Force: 1,200 service people and around 20 aircraft.

Due to having such a small air force, Lithuania is provided with support from NATO members to assist with patrolling Lithuanian airspace.

Navy: Lithuania possesses 12 naval vessels.



POLITICS

Domestic politics

- Highly regulated economy; ranked 124th in the world on “ease of doing business” from World Bank.
- Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International): 35 (102nd); corruption is a major problem exacerbated by local corruption and government control of major mining interests.
- Joined the European Union and NATO in 2004.

Foreign Policy Concerns

- Extremely pro-EU, with heavy engagement with other Baltic and Nordic states, and is on course to join the Euro in 2015.
- Lithuania is currently participating in two international missions, the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and the European Union Force Althea in Bosnia.
- Lithuania is an origin, transit, and destination country for trafficked persons.
- Border disputes with the neighbours – maritime borders with Latvia, and various disputes with Russia ranging from Soviet era crimes, to spying, and particular customs restrictions.

More Information

Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lithuania>

CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lh.html>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17536867>

Latest news from the New York Times (<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/lithuania/>),

The Economist (<http://www.economist.com/topics/lithuania>),

The Guardian (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/lithuania> and

Al-Jazeera (<http://www.aljazeera.com/category/country/lithuania>),